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Going to the dogs

Local woman makes canines her creative and career focus
See story on page 8

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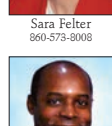
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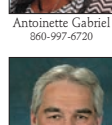
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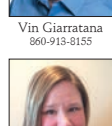
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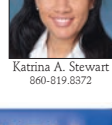
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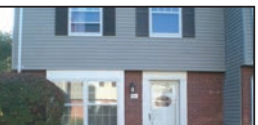
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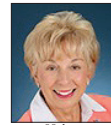
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February 2017

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

You can't be a suburb of nowhere."

- *Hartford Mayor Luke Broin*

See story page 10

ON THE COVER

Annie Kilroy, owner of Annie's Pet Spa, is working on several books to continue the series she has written about her rescue dog Cusak. Themes of the books include educating readers about bullying and adoption.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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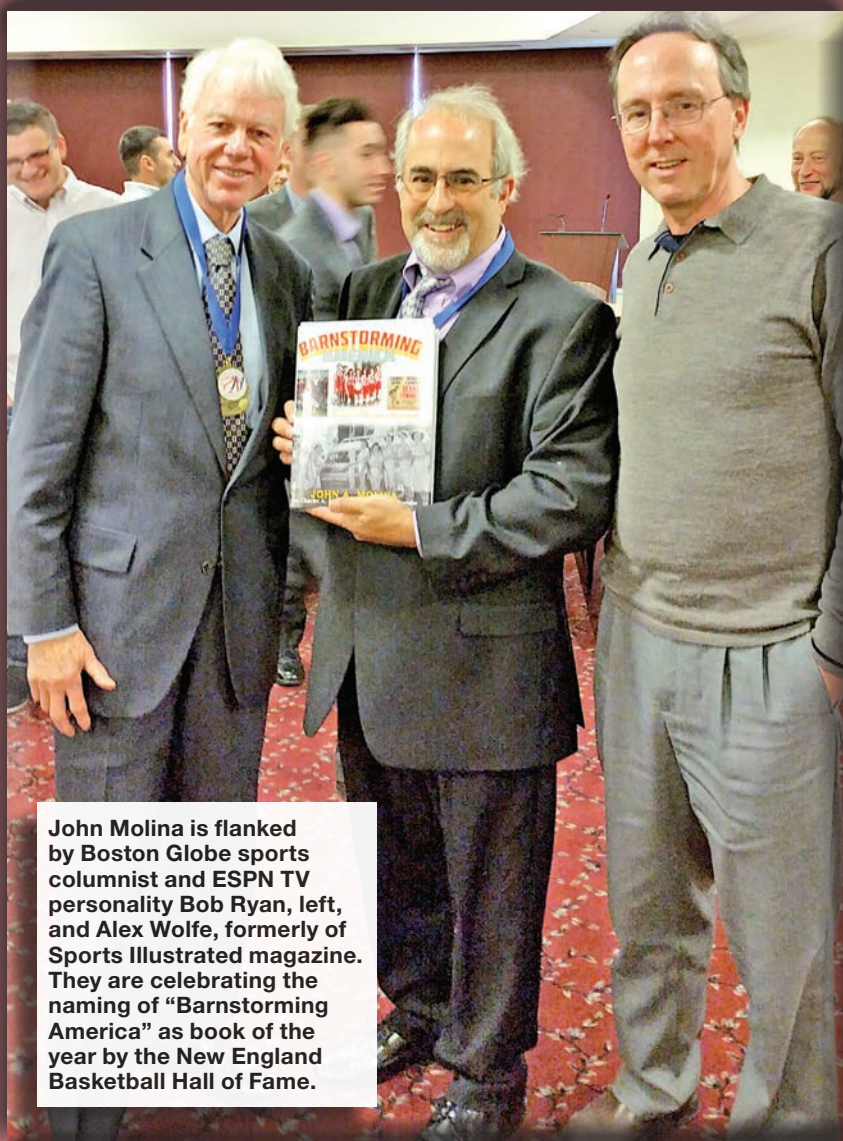
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John Molina has a passion for celebrating and chronicling the days when women's professional basketball teams barnstormed the country. He possesses a wide variety of artifacts and collectibles from those days.

Photo by Mark Jahne



John Molina is flanked by Boston Globe sports columnist and ESPN TV personality Bob Ryan, left, and Alex Wolfe, formerly of Sports Illustrated magazine. They are celebrating the naming of "Barnstorming America" as book of the year by the New England Basketball Hall of Fame.

Courtesy photos

Book reaps instant honors

John Molina chronicles the early days of women's basketball

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Before Geno Auriemma and Pat Summit, before Rebecca Lobo and Maya Moore, before it became an Olympic sport, there was women's basketball. It's a history many people don't know much about.

John Molina is working hard to change that. The Rocky Hill resident has a true love for the game and its players and recently published a book entitled "Barnstorming America: Stories from the Pioneers of Women's Basketball."

It has already been named book of the year by the New England Basketball Hall of Fame. The forward is written by Donna Orender, former president of the WNBA.

Molina is a 2007 inductee of the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame and a 2013 inductee of the New England Basketball Hall of Fame.

"There's never been a book done on barnstorming," he said.

Chris Voelz, executive director of the Collegiate Women's Sports Awards – The Honda Cup, praised the book as a combination of the popular women's baseball movie "A League of Their Own" mixed in with a bit of "Forrest Gump" to chronicle both that time in U.S. history as well as the early days of women's basketball.

The book jacket also contains praise from John Doleva, president and CEO of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass.

"For the first time in history, the stories of basketball's First Ladies comes to life in John Molina's 'Barnstorming America.' Through their own words, tales of past glories fit neatly into the broader context of a bygone era," he wrote.

"Those basketball barnstormers paved the way for today's modern game and it is high time we hear

their stories and celebrate their victories," he added.

It was only a few years since women had earned the right to vote when the first teams were formed in the 1930s. Other societal changes like workplace equality and protection from sexual harassment were decades away from adoption. So they had plenty to prove.

Molina spoke of a 1901 Spaulding rule book he found written specifically for women's basketball, which started as a partial-court game before eventually expanding to full length. Within that book is the editorial comment that declared the writers did not believe women could behave in an unselfish manner when it came to team play and sharing the ball.

Teams with colorful names such as the All American Red Heads, Texas Cowgirls, Ozark Hill Billies and Arkansas Travelers used to crisscross the country playing a highly skilled and entertaining brand of basketball. They were professionals and moved from one town to the next, competing against teams made up exclusively of men and most often defeating them.

"The women only played against men and they would win," Molina said.

That caused problems on occasion because sexist attitudes were prevalent in some locales and the hometown crowd didn't like to see their men beaten by a bunch of females. Sometimes the police had to provide protection as they left the arena, he said.

Their appearances were highly appealing and often drew an entire town to the local arena or gym, he added. To help draw a crowd, the women would put on a halftime show of dribbling, passing, shooting and other skills similar to the more famous Harlem Globetrotters.

But Molina is adamant that to



John Molina stands with former University of Connecticut star and current Tufts University head coach Carla Berube, to his immediate left, and some of her players.

label them as simply the female version of the Globetrotters would do a huge disservice to their place in American sports history.

Unlike the Globetrotters, who had a specific traveling opponent that was expected to lose most of the games, these teams of women faced different players every evening. They had to earn every victory against determined opponents.

That's why he decided to take the passion he already had for collecting as much information and paraphernalia as he could and wrote his book. The South Glastonbury native first learned of this form of

basketball as a child when he discovered his grandmother was a former player.

Bernice Gondek Molina played for the J.B. Williams Soap Factory team in Glastonbury in the 1930s. The appeal of the women's game then, as it remains today, is based upon teamwork and sharing the ball for the greater good.

"It was everything the men's game isn't. It isn't selfish," he said.

Molina tried to do online research into this little-known piece of Americana starting in 1995 but found little information online. That only fueled his desire to try harder.

"That's when I developed the passion," he said. "I want to educate. There really is a rich history."

He's not an archivist or historian by profession. He works as a system analyst for the state government.

"This is my 3:30 in the morning job," he said with a smile.

He has collected countless items and collectibles related to women's barnstorming basketball. Many were donated to museums, including the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

The All American Red Heads were so called because every member of the team had red hair, either natural or dyed. Created in 1936 and originally owned and coached by C.M. "Ole" Olson, they rose to greater prominence under their second owner and coach, Orwell Moore.

Moore, who lived in Arkansas, owned the team from 1955 to 1986. They traveled in a stretch Pontiac station wagon. He was trashing his archives when Molina contacted him and asked for the remaining items.

"Orwell Moore was burning his stuff, he was throwing his stuff out. No one cared," he said.

Moore sent him copious items including two boxes of old films of the Red Heads in action. Molina nominated them for special recognition and the team was inducted into

the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012. He gave the eulogy at Moore's funeral.

"At one point, I had 20,000 artifacts," Molina said. "The more I heard their stories, the more I started piecing them together. These teams offered women a chance to play basketball when there were no other real opportunities."

"These women were playing eight games a week. They played double-headers on Sunday."

- John Molina

There were no teams for girls in high school or college from the 1930s to the 1960s so this was the only opportunity for female players to enjoy the game and showcase their skills.

The irony is that the adoption of federal Title IX legislation in 1972, which required high schools, colleges and universities to provide equal sports options for female students,



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was a major factor in the end of these barnstorming teams a decade later.

"Title IX was probably the final nail in the coffin for them," Molina said.

The youngest of these barnstorming women are now in their 50s and many are much older. He said they were, for the most part, not aware of teams other than their own and are just now making connections and creating friendships over their common history.

Some of those teams from the 1940s and 1950s were all white. Others were integrated and some, like the Harlem Chicks, were all black, he added.

Molina said the Red Heads and other teams played 200 games a year and recorded at least a 70 percent win rate over their male opponents. To make money, they had to travel and perform constantly.

"These women were playing eight games a week. They played double-headers on Sunday," he said.

He helped to organize a reunion game in 2010 in which the Red

Heads competed against the alumni of the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers.

The growth in popularity of women's collegiate basketball has enabled him to attend several NCAA regional and Final Four tournaments. He plans to attend this year's Final Four in Dallas for a book signing with former barnstormers.

"I've already got 30 players from seven different teams to attend," he said.

He knows of one former player who grew up in and still resides in Connecticut. Gail Marks of Willimantic lived in Enfield during her playing days.

Molina enjoys watching the University of Connecticut women's team play and is impressed with its record winning streak (91 games at press time) compiled over four seasons. But were the Red Heads better?

"The Red Heads won 96 games in a row – in 96 days," he said.

All of them against men.

"Barnstorming America: Stories from the Pioneers of Women's Basketball" is a hardcover volume priced at \$34.95 and available on



John Molina is surrounded by photos and other paraphernalia he has collected over the years. Notice the striped shirt and travel bag used by one of the most prominent teams, the All American Red Heads.

Amazon.com and through Acclaim Press in Missouri.

Molina initially planned for 300 numbered and signed editions of his book, but there was so much interest and so many pre-orders that the number was increased to 500. Those are already gone.

"Initial sales have been way beyond anything I could have

imagined," he said.

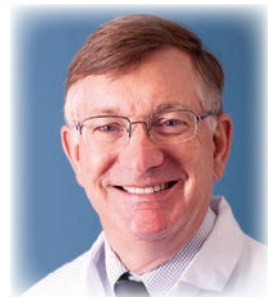
He is willing to work with non-profit organizations to help them raise funds by holding sales and signings of his book at a discounted rate. **RHL**

Visit barnstormingamerica.net or acclaimpress.com to learn more. John Molina can be contacted at womensbasketball@aol.com.

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Martino worked well into her golden years.

Courtesy photos

Remembering Berta Martino

A party was held Dec. 14 at the Rocky Hill Senior Center to honor the late Wilberta “Berta” Martino, a longtime town employee who was active with the older population.

Mayor Claudia Baio, Deputy

Mayor Joseph Kochanek and Cathy Sylvester, senior coordinator, presented family members with a plaque honoring Martino’s legacy. It now hangs outside two nearby activity rooms in the town hall’s community center wing.

It was all part of the senior center’s annual holiday luncheon. The festivities opened with a musical performance by the Rocky Hill Senior Serenaders.

“It’s a very special day today,” Sylvester said. “She worked with us [in Parks and Recreation] until she was 92.”

Martino was remembered as someone who always greeted people with a smile, who was extremely helpful and an overall “great person.” She worked for the town for some 50 years, starting as the assistant to Dana Whitman, the first town manager in Rocky Hill history.

“She was a mentor to us, she was an aunt. We loved her very much. We were blessed to have her,” Sylvester said. **RHL**

Wilberta “Berta” Martino was a longtime town employee and well known at the Rocky Hill Senior Center.



Bob Arrington, President of the National Funeral Directors Association and Diana Duksa Kurz, CFSP, accepting the Pursuit of Excellence Award on behalf of the entire team at Duksa Family Funeral Homes.

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Meet Annie Kilroy

Her life has gone to the dogs, in a most happy way

by Mark Jahne
Editor



Annie Kilroy is the author of two books starring her dog Cusak.

Annie Kilroy loves dogs; cats, too. She runs a pet spa at 796 Old Main St. and has taken up writing about dogs as a way to help parents discuss difficult issues with their children. Kilroy was born in Hartford and graduated from Rocky Hill High School in 1982. During her school years, she worked at the Animal Hospital of Rocky Hill, Tedwin Kennels, Candlewick Kennels and various other local animal hospitals and horse stables.

She studied canine science at Newbury College in Massachusetts. She took a strong interest in professional pet grooming and attributes her skills to master groomers who came before her.

Her love of animals led her to open Annie's Pet Spa. She enjoys coming to work every day where she not only grooms dogs and cats, but interacts with them. That, in turn, helps spark her imagination to write about them.



Samson the golden retriever and Cusak are close friends.

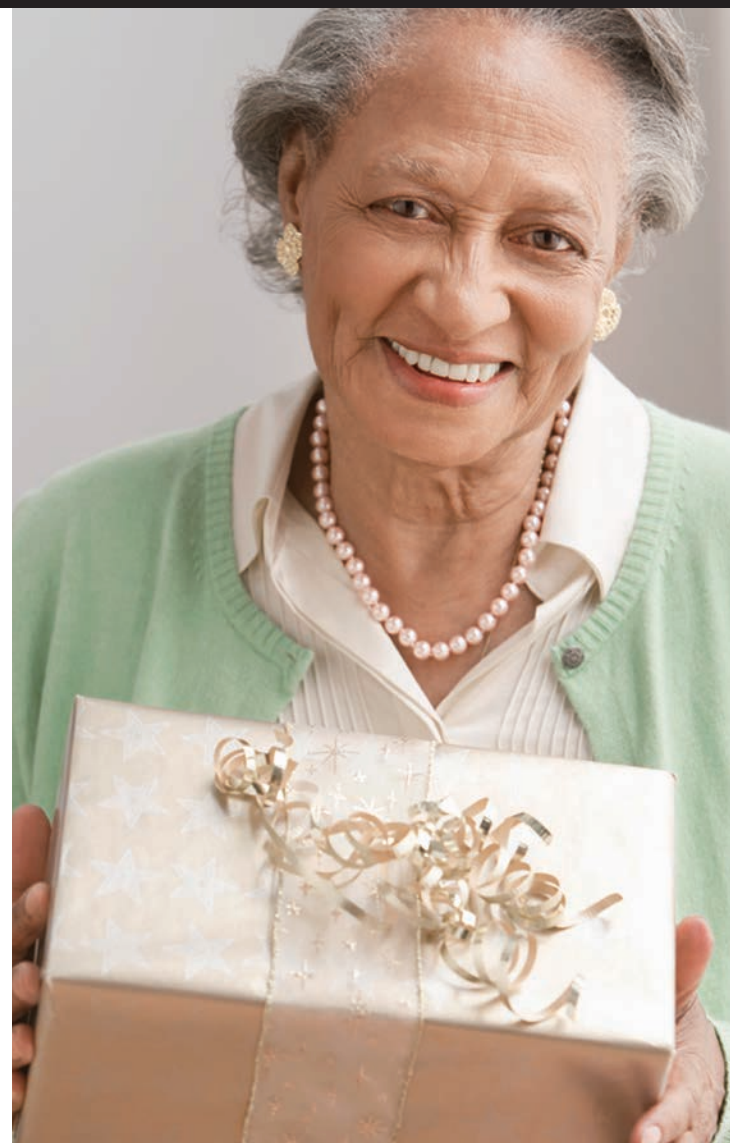
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Kilroy has authored a pair of books starring the adventures of her own dog Cusak. The books are intended to enable parents to discuss difficult topics with their children through the eyes and experiences of the dogs.

"Cusak Goes to New York City" addresses the issue of adoption. It is full of dog and cat photos, some taken on location in the city.

"Cusak's Fifth Birthday Party" looks at bullying and friendship. In this book, also featuring many photos, he stands up for another dog named Bubbles who is being treated poorly by others.

"I take the characters of the dogs that come to my day care center and I write stories about them," she said. "I've done two so far, I've got [numbers] three and four in the works."

The next two books will delve into issues related to prejudice and divorce. Kilroy is delighted that many people have read her books and taken an interest in them.

Among those impressed with her literary efforts is Darlene Listro,

assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction for the Rocky Hill Public Schools.

"I recently read Ms. Kilroy's books. The photographs of the pets are precious. They really help the story come alive. The ending of Annie's book, 'Cusak Goes to New York City,' brought tears to my eyes. What a heartwarming story," she said.

Annie's Pet Spa offers expert scissoring, flea treatments, coat treatments, medicated baths and all other forms of grooming to American Kennel Club standards. If Fido gets sprayed by a skunk, they can take care of that as well.

"I opened the pet spa in 2006. I've worked with animals all my life," Kilroy said.

Pet fashions and accessories are also available at the spa, many of them hand made by Kilroy or her employees and friends. She also created a line of essential oils that can be used topically to cure anxiety, hot spots and ear infections.

She has more than 20 years of

experience with animals and loves to be surrounded by dogs in particular. Her shop was first located on the Silas Deane Highway before moving to its current and larger address on Old Main Street after about one year in business.

Kilroy is a lifelong Rocky Hill resident. She enjoys conducting fundraisers for Out to Pasture Farms and Rescue of Newington. **RHL**

For more information call 860-257-0863 or see anniespetspa.com or her Facebook page.



Kilroy grooms Chloe the French poodle.



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Bronin states his case

Hartford mayor comes to town seeking understanding and support

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The city of Hartford is in dire financial straits. Mayor Luke Bronin is keenly aware of this and he also knows that the city cannot go it alone if it expects to survive.

That's why he is visiting as many of the suburbs as possible to explain the capital city's situation and seek whatever kind of help and support he can get. His tour of central Connecticut came to Rocky Hill Dec. 12. Bronin spent more than two hours stating his case and answering questions from local residents.

The reception was not exactly warm and fuzzy. While many of those who took the opportunity to speak thanked Bronin for coming and credited his courage in doing so, several of those questions and comments were critical in nature. His call for more regional cooperation did not engender much support.

The Town Council was present, minus one member, although Mayor Claudia Baio pointed out that this was not an official meeting and no town business would be transacted. A senior administrator from the school system was present, as were state Rep. Tony Guerrera and state Sen. Paul Doyle.

Bronin, a Democrat elected in November 2015, started his talk by making the point that he wasn't asking the town for money. He then

spoke about the connections between the city and its suburbs and why the people of Rocky Hill should care about Hartford's future, which in one scenario could result in filing for municipal bankruptcy.

"This is not to make a pitch for you to bail out Hartford," he said.

But he quickly added that many Rocky Hill residents work in the city and many city employees and retirees live here, too. Bronin pointed out that thousands of people in this region either used to live in the city or have parents or grandparents who once lived there.

Hartford is facing an approximate \$50 million budget deficit. This is expected to rise to \$70 million annually in the 2017-2018 budget and beyond because of the restructured cost of paying down debt.

"The financial challenges are huge. It's a case I wish I didn't have to make," he said. "The city borrowed too much. There is no ques-



Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin is looking for help to bring Connecticut's capital city back to prosperity. His traveling road show to address suburban residents came to Rocky Hill Dec. 12.

tion there have been mistakes." Another millstone around Hartford's neck is the high cost of old pension agreements and steps have been taken to remedy that problem. The pensions current retirees receive are more lucrative than those that will be received by current employees when they retire.

Bronin said there are certain things he and the City Council cannot cut because of legal obligations: police contract, fire contract, debt service and pensions. The city workforce has been reduced from more than 2,000 employees in 1995 to 1,300 today, he said.

"We made some very deep cuts in this last budget in things that really matter," he added. "We don't have enough cops. DPW [public works] is as lean as it's ever been."

Negotiations are underway with several unions but any changes favoring city government that become part of those contracts will

"We have to think about what do we have to do to make the region stronger. You can't be a suburb of nowhere."

- Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin

not be enough by themselves to stem the tide of red ink. The city has already tapped into its fund reserve and he said it is completely gone.

The mayor added that he is working hard with the city's major employers to keep them here. They worry about attracting and retaining the kind of skilled workers they need.

The problem, as it is for all 169 cities and towns in Connecticut, is the fact that the law limits their ability to raise funds to the property tax. They can also accept state and federal grants, but those funds are not guaranteed and may not be consistent from one year to the next.

He said few other states place such a heavy reliance on the property tax.

Bronin said that because Hartford is home to so many state, college, nonprofit and other tax-exempt buildings and land, it simply does not have a large enough tax base to pay its own way. West Hartford, Manchester and Glastonbury all have more taxable property than Hartford.

He added that a municipal financial system based upon the property tax tends to work much better in a suburban community than in a city. Hartford's woes are shared to various extents by New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury and other cities.

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All of those tax-exempt properties are subject to a state program called PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) that was designed to give cities and towns at least part of the money they would receive if those properties were taxable. But it is well below 100 percent of assessed value in part, Bronin asserted, because the state legislature has not fully funded PILOT for many years.

He added that the reimbursement rate for state land and buildings is less than what is paid for other tax-exempt properties. Hartford has numerous state department headquarters and other facilities within its borders. A fully funded PILOT program would mean an additional \$50 million in revenue for the city, according to Bronin.

"That's at the root of the problem," he said. "We've got a city that's built on a tax base that's too small. It's been a problem since the wealth fled the city. You can't run a city on the tax rate of a suburb. So much of the wealth left the city decades ago."

Past mayors and councils have tried to quell the red ink by constantly raising taxes and selling off valuable city assets, such as parking garages. Hartford's mill rate is 74.29, nearly double the rate in Rocky Hill.

"The biggest burden for small business in Hartford is the property tax rate," he said.

Bronin blamed high taxes for the closing of popular restaurants and businesses on Franklin Avenue in the South End. It is simply not possible for the city to either cut or tax its way out of its current deficit, he added.

"We're trying to dig our way out of this mess that was decades in the making," he said.

Then he addressed the primary theme of his visit.

"Why should you care? There are a bunch of reasons," he said. "There are 100,000 people who travel into Hartford to work every day."

Municipal bankruptcy would likely result in the loss of some major employers to other states. That places these 100,000 people at risk of unemployment, he said.

Successful regions around the country all feature cities that serve as engines of economic growth. So,

helping Hartford recover and making it successful would also benefit its suburbs, Bronin contended.

He added that the state is stuck in an economic growth rut and the way out of that is to help urban centers become engines of growth. He also suggested that a change in state law to share sales tax revenue with municipalities would help all cities and towns.

He called for creation of a regional and statewide partnership and said it is time for city and suburban residents alike to realize that this is a region and not a collection of individual municipalities separated from one another by dotted lines on a map.

"The growth everywhere in this country is happening in cities," he said. "We have to think about what do we have to do to make that region stronger. You can't be a suburb of nowhere."

He also questioned the wisdom and financial model of 169 municipalities replicating the same services. Bronin said cities and towns should be able to find ways to save money by sharing or combining services while still maintaining home-town independence.

He pledged to do everything he can to prevent bankruptcy. Bronin said the negative impact would spread beyond the city's borders, including to suburban residents who are city government retirees and would see their pensions reduced.

"I don't think bankruptcy is a smart alternative," he said.

Some in the audience agreed with him but others clearly did not. Those who were more vocal argued that city government spent decades creating the financial mess it faces today and, if bankruptcy is the only realistic solution, so be it.

"You should not be out here looking for us to solve your problems," resident Ed Peruta said.

Fellow resident Bryan Addy, who is a construction executive, told Bronin that his company doesn't even bother to bid on city projects because of all the restrictions, including special labor agreements and a certain percentage of city residents being hired to work on the job.

Bronin responded that the city has to do whatever it can to help its residents find employment, noting that its unemployment rate is dou-

ble the statewide number.

Others criticized the high pensions historically paid to many city employees. One speaker said federal laws need to be changed regarding binding arbitration. Another said it's at least partly the state's fault because PILOT and Education Cost Sharing (state support of public education) have been under-funded for years.

Bronin acknowledged that there are instances in which individual city employees retired with fat pensions that pay them more for not working than they earned while employed.

"Nobody is more frustrated than I am with a pension that is 50 percent higher than their base pay," he said.

He encouraged those in attendance to ask their legislators to take up Hartford's cause while at the same time acknowledging that the state faces its own budget nightmare, a deficit projected at between \$1.2 billion and \$1.5 billion.

"What I'm looking for is your help talking to your legislators and saying Hartford matters to us. I want your help in making the case that a strong region needs a strong city."

Guerrera and Doyle appeared uncomfortable with this approach and offered their comments, with Doyle noting that he had intended to simply be a spectator. The two told the audience that the state's budget woes are unprecedented and they are unsure if they will be able to bring home the usual amount of

state aid to the towns in their districts, let alone help the city.

Guerrera serves Rocky Hill and parts of Newington and Wethersfield. Doyle serves those three towns plus Cromwell and Middletown.

"We have very difficult financial problems at the state of Connecticut right now," Doyle said. "We're not going to come up with [more] PILOT money. That's the reality."

"We are dealing with a \$1.3 billion deficit ... my phone has not stopped ringing. Everything is on the chopping block right now," Guerrera said. "Even if we get all that PILOT money, where do we go from there?"

He suggested that one project that would help the city is the reconstruction of I-84 at ground level, comparing it to Boston's "Big Dig." But that is a long-term economic



"I want your help in making the case that a strong region needs a strong city."

– Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin

development proposal.

When a questioner asked Bronin for his opinion about the trouble-plagued baseball stadium being constructed in the downtown north section of the city, the mayor said he thought the project was a bad idea and it was one reason he ran for office. He was also opposed to the city borrowing money to

fund the stadium.

Stuck with it now, he said the best option was doing what the city did to call the insurance bond for mounting issues with schedule delays and poor work. The insurance company has since hired a different construction company with experience being in building stadiums, something the first company did not have, he said.

Another challenge is the XL Center on Trumbull Street, owned

not by the city but by the Capital Region Development Authority. It is outdated and losing money and the choices are to invest heavily to bring it up to date or shut it down and have a huge concrete eyesore in the middle of downtown.

Neither option is appealing to Bronin. But he doesn't know what else can be done or from where that reinvestment funding would come.

"It isn't competitive with any of the other arenas in New England," he said.

He was challenged by a town resident who works at Brainard Airport in the South Meadows, a facility he has suggested might be closed. The mayor explained his thinking.

The airport and nearby business block produce revenue for the city but so much more could be done. Aircraft are exempt from the property tax and there are 700 acres of tax-exempt land sitting at the crossroads of two major interstate highways that could be prime development property.

That land contains a sewage treatment facility and what he called an outdated trash-burning power plant, among other exempt uses. He pointed out that those facilities benefit the entire region.

The clock is ticking on the city's budget deficit and he acknowledged that there is precious little time to eradicate the red ink. Bronin fully expects that any additional revenue will come with numerous strings attached. **RHL**

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People notes

Robert Walker, 47, was sworn in as a deputy chief of the Rocky Hill Fire Department. He began his fire-fighting career at the age of 16 and will be responsible for departmental training.

Rocky Hill Fire Department members **Doug Clarke** and **Steve Wilson** received the Chief's Award and Division Firefighter of the Year Award, respectively. Firefighter Clarke has eight years with the department and Firefighter Wilson has almost two years of service.

Christina Bobbitt, **Evan Menzel**, **Emily Siegel** and **Kraymer Bond** were named to the dean's list at the University of Rhode Island.

Tea Kokic, **Arianna Genovese** and **Victoria Spellman** were named to the dean's list at Lasell College.

Alexia Gooden was named to the dean's list at American International College.

Kelly Clancy performed in Western New England University's production of "The Servant of Two Masters." **RHL**

Business notes

Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union hired Robert Bruhn Jr. to serve as its senior vice president and chief financial officer. Nutmeg also promoted Al Festini to senior vice president, chief technology and security officer.

Kimberly Bogert has joined **Little Scholars Preschool** at 805 Old Main St. as its new director and head teacher. She holds an associate degree in early childhood education from Gateway Community College and a bachelor's degree in child studies from Charter Oak State College. She has taught preschool for the past 17 years and believes in a play-based curriculum, allowing children to explore through hands-on activities. **RHL**



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From the mayor's desk

Starting the new year with positive energy

by Claudia Baio

Happy new year. I hope you all had a happy, healthy holiday and are ready for a prosperous and positive new year. Also this month, as is customary, we remembered Martin Luther King Jr. on Martin Luther King Day.

With so many great quotes from Dr. King from which to choose, I share this one with you, which seems most appropriate at the start of this new year:

"If you can't fly, then run; if you can't run, then walk; if you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

The year is off to a great start with lots of activity, a lot to report and a few things to celebrate as well. I am pleased to announce that the council appointed Bob Herron as town historian.

Bob has been a long-standing and active member of the Rocky Hill Historical Society. He was born and raised in Hartford, served in the military as an airfield firefighter and had a long-standing career in the field of information engineering and data architecture. He is currently preparing a book on Rocky Hill residents who served in World War I.

He has also been assisting the

historical society in computerizing the information relating to the collection of artifacts. Those who may have gone on some of the history walks in town may know Bob.

The timing is perfect, as we will soon be establishing our committee to embark on the planning for our upcoming 2018 celebration of the 175th anniversary of Rocky Hill. Anyone who might be interested in assisting on the planning for the anniversary festivities may contact either Lisa Zerio, director of parks and recreation, John Mehr, our interim town manager, or me.

We have a more immediate anniversary celebration in town as well. This year the Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department celebrates its 90th anniversary. Stay tuned for additional information that will be shared as it becomes available.

The council hired a consultant to conduct a study to help us to develop a plan to move forward with a senior center space that our senior citizens can call their own. This consultant was vetted through the Senior Liaison Committee under the leadership of Chairman John Emmanuel.

This is an exciting proposal that will allow us to move forward with

seeking expert advice and making sure that we come up with a plan that makes the most sense in moving forward with an action plan for the senior center.

As part of the November 2016 election, voters approved the referendum to allow the town to move forward with building an intermediate school to help alleviate elementary school overcrowding. I'm pleased to report that the Board of Education and the town government have worked collaboratively to develop a plan and resolution that would establish a school committee to shepherd this project from beginning to end.

Board of Education Chairman Frank Morris, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Zito, interim Town Manager John Mehr and I worked collaboratively to discuss the development of this committee. It will consist of members of the Public Building Committee, Board of Education and Town Council, with Morris and I as ex-officio members.

The committee will remain in place to see the project through to its conclusion so that there will be no interruption in progress or learning curve for introducing new members as a result of any changes in leadership. We are very proud to

have been able to work collaboratively on this in a way that put a committee together that will be focused on this project from beginning to end in a way that best serves our Town.

Congratulations to Jeff Foss-Rugan who was recently promoted to police sergeant. He was fortunate to have his 93-year-old grandfather pin him at the ceremony. Jeff is a five-year veteran of the Rocky Hill Police Department.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Coffee with the Mayor that will take place on Friday, Feb. 3 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Atria Greenridge Place. Join us for social time and casual conversation.

Congratulations to the two businesses in town celebrating their openings with ribbon cuttings: Kiddie Academy Educational Child Care and Bellissimo Restaurant. Welcome to the town and we wish you the best of luck.

Mayor's office hours are held generally on Fridays. I welcome your calls and visits. To avoid the potential of having to wait or there not being an open time slot, schedule an appointment in advance. You may contact me either via phone at 860-258-2740 or email at cbaio@rocky-hillct.gov. **RHL**



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in the classroom

The Stevens School PTO hosted a paint night for parents at On the Border restaurant, enabling adults to paint wine glasses.



“It’s all a community effort and we would not be able to do it without volunteers or generous donations.”

– Lisa Howard

Photos courtesy of Caroline Shea and Lisa Howard

Stevens PTO gives back to families and community

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Within the walls of Stevens School are a multitude of people who make each day run smoothly.

From teachers and administrators to nurses, secretaries and custodians, it

takes a great deal of effort and resources to educate children.

One group that strives to assist that effort is the Stevens Parent Teacher Organization, a team of volunteers looking to improve the lives and education of their children.

“I wanted to be involved in my kid’s education and know what’s going on in

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EDUCATION



Members of the Parent-Teacher Organization at Stevens School host events for children, families and teachers. At the beginning of the school year, the group held a welcome-back luncheon for teachers.

the school," PTO Vice President Melissa Incarvito said of her decision to join the group.

While the primary role of the organization is to aid students, its involvement goes far beyond that.

"We do a lot of different things," PTO Membership Chairman Lisa Howard said. "It can range from a teachers' welcome back luncheon to a movie night for families to providing buses for kids to go on field trips and other enrichment activities."

In addition to providing experiences for students, teachers and families, members of the PTO also work to raise funds for resources and the building. This year, the PTO decided to work toward replac-

ing the school sign in front of the building as well as replacing the furniture in the library media center.

"We hear they have to fix it a lot," PTO President Caroline Shea said of the furniture.

The process to raise funds for these two projects will not happen immediately because they are not the organization's only priorities. In addition to raising money, the PTO also hosts fundraisers for various charitable endeavors on both the local and national level.

It has established a relationship with the town Department of Social Services and annually hosts events for its benefit. In late 2016, the

group held a movie night, with half of the money raised going to the town food pantry. It also conducted a coat drive for social services in November.

"It's kind of like you're an event planner for a lot of events happening at once," Shea said with a laugh.

Along with raising money for the school or charities, the PTO also organizes events to provide a fun and safe activity for students and families. Each year the group hosts a Halloween Spooktacular at which children are able to dress up in costumes and walk through the halls.

"We're able to get other groups to help us, like the Girl Scouts usually come out and decorate a room," Howard said.

The group also works to make its events fit with the curriculum when possible. It is in the midst of planning Jump Rope for Stevens in conjunction with the physical education classes.

"It is just a fun way for kids to stay active," Shea said.

The PTO also hosts events for teachers, such as a welcome-back luncheon at the beginning of the school year and soup night during parent-teacher conferences.

"We asked for volunteers and we got 12 or 13 soups," Howard said. "Stevens has a great community that will really pitch in when we ask."

The PTO is also cognizant of

the parents of Stevens students and works to bring about events for them as well, such as a paint night at On the Border restaurant.

All of its efforts are made possible through the volunteers. The group meets monthly and typically sees about 10 people at each meeting.

"We put in a lot of work," Howard said.

"We work hard, but it's rewarding for us," Incarvito added.

According to Shea, Incarvito and Howard, the PTO would not be able to provide as much as it does for the school without support from both Stevens staff and the community at large.

"[Principal] Jason Maziarz has been very supportive of us," Shea said, noting that last year Maziarz volunteered to sit in a dunk tank for one of its events. "He's really a good sport."

The PTO has received support from numerous businesses including West Side Marketplace, Sunny Farm, Fair Weather Acres and Kohl's.

"That's just a few out of the many local businesses that were happy to help us," Howard said.

"It's all a community effort and we would not be able to do it without volunteers or generous donations." **RHL**

For more information about the Stevens School Parent-Teacher Organization visit its Facebook page.

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EDUCATION

Students of the month

Pair of eighth-graders is recognized with CAPSS Award

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Two eighth grade students from each district are selected each year to be honored with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Student Award. Based largely on recommendations from the teachers who work with them each day, this year's winners from Griswold Middle School are Olivia Weeks and Omar Ahmed.

The awards, presented by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Zito, seek to commend students for their leadership service to the school, academic prowess relative to ability, and service to the community.

Her teachers said Olivia, 13, met all of these criteria on the blue team

at GMS. They jointly wrote a letter recommending her for the recognition.

"Olivia is a mature, considerate, conscientious and diligent student," they wrote. "She has an intrinsic desire to learn and a natural curiosity which drives her to succeed both in and out of the classroom."

While she is grateful for the award, Olivia does not work hard in hopes of receiving accolades. She simply enjoys being able to study literature and the arts.

"My favorite class is either English or Social Studies," she said. "We read a lot of books and I like learning about history."

An avid reader, Olivia enjoys both the books she studies in class

as well as reading on her own.

"I have a lot of favorite books," she said. "I think 'The Alchemist' is my favorite. I found it at the bookstore and just loved it."

When not reading stories, Olivia enjoys creating them. She writes short stories during her free time, especially in the summer, when she has less homework. Along with creating stories, she is also a dedicated artist who has had her pieces displayed throughout the school halls.

"I really like painting," she said. "I started a long time ago. I've been doing it ever since I could remember."

Inspired by her favorite artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Olivia said she paints a great deal of land-

**"These are two
really great kids."**

– Rick Watson

scapes, animals and nature.

"I try to make them not just what I see, but add something else to it," she said.

She spends any free period she can in the art room and hopes to expand her artistic palette by learning more about different mediums, especially through classes at Rocky Hill High School next fall.

"I'm thinking about taking pottery," she said. "I like sculpture, but I haven't had a lot of experience with it."

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EDUCATION



Olivia Weeks, an eighth-grader at Griswold Middle School, has a strong interest in the arts. She recently created a large, shiny beetle in her art class that was put on display in the halls of the school.

Olivia's artistic talents have also led her to join other artistic endeavors. She and a friend worked to design and paint the backdrop for the school's upcoming production of "The Music Man," for which she will also work tech crew.

She also plays soccer on both the school's Unified Sports team and with Rocky Hill's travel program.

"I grew up with soccer, since my brother plays," she said.

She has played the sport for seven years and hopes to continue at the high school.

"She's such a well-rounded student," science teacher and blue team leader Amy Hall said. "While her passion is more in the arts, she still excels in the math and science classes."

While her academic and extracurricular pursuits are considered impressive, it is her positive attitude and kindness to others that made Olivia's teachers nominate her.

"I can count on her to work with anybody, students of all back-

grounds," Hall said. "She's motivated to make positive decisions. She's just an absolute pleasure to have in class. I feel lucky."

Olivia's fellow award recipient, Omar Ahmed, was similarly praised by his teachers on the royal team.

"Omar is an outstanding student who not only meets with academic success, but also stands out as a leader among his peers," his teachers wrote in a letter. "Teachers who have had the privilege to educate Omar can attest to his many fine qualities both as a student and as a person."

Also described as a well-rounded person, Omar, 14, said his favorite subjects in school are social studies and math.

"We're learning about American history and the government, which I thought was perfect timing with the election going on this year," he said.

Along with his academic pursuits, he is also an accomplished athlete. He has played basketball in the Rocky Hill league since first grade, the town's travel league since the fifth grade and now as captain of

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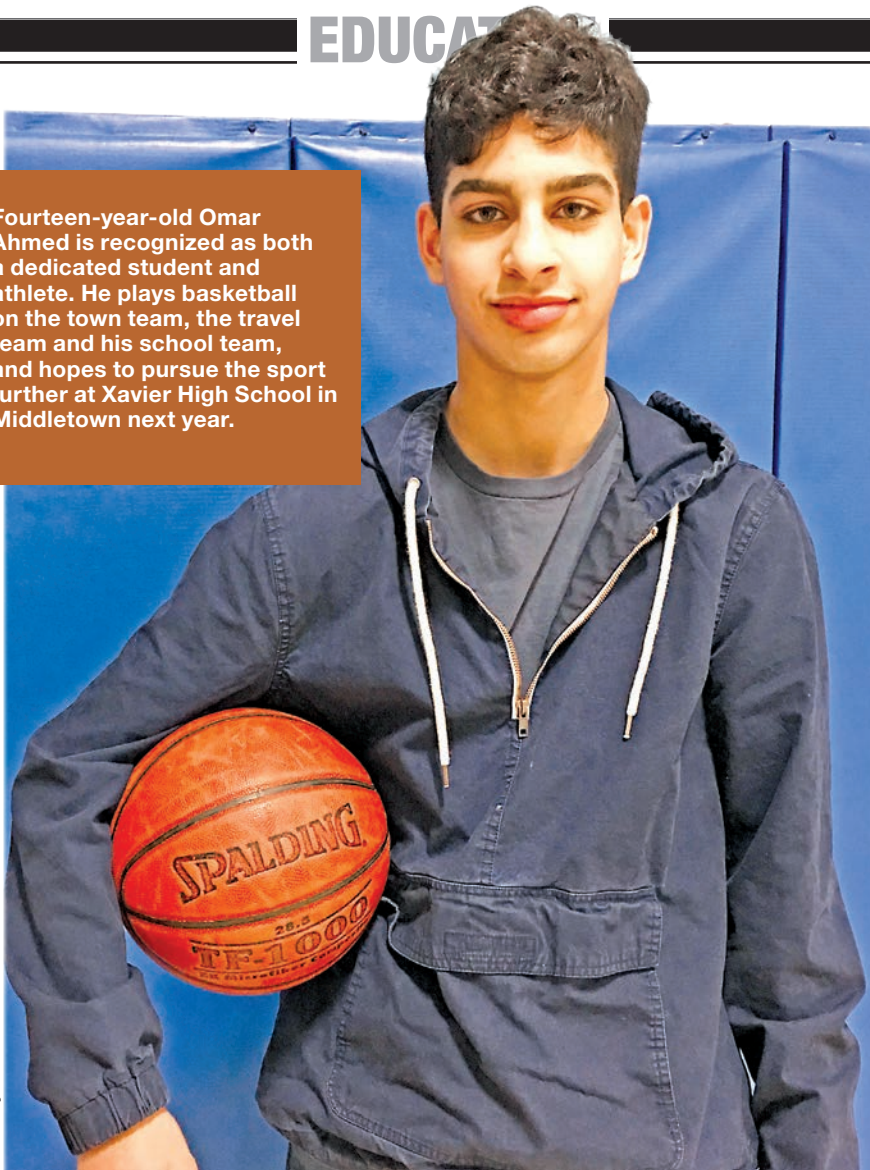
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EDUCATION

Fourteen-year-old Omar Ahmed is recognized as both a dedicated student and athlete. He plays basketball on the town team, the travel team and his school team, and hopes to pursue the sport further at Xavier High School in Middletown next year.

Photos by Allie Rivera



the GMS team.

"I love basketball," he said.

The title of captain was given to him by his coaches for his dedication to the team. He hopes to continue playing next year when he attends Xavier High School in Middletown.

When not racing across the court, Omar also can be seen defending the net. He is the goalie for the school's soccer team, having played the sport as a child and returning for this season.

"We actually did pretty well this year," he said, adding he was unsure of his abilities at first.

For the first time in his middle school career, Omar did not play football this year. He sustained a broken knee playing the game this past year.

"I didn't want to risk hurting it again and ruining my chances to play basketball," he said.

Sports are very important to him, but his academic pursuits always have the highest priority.

"I would put school in front of sports, always," he said. "If I needed to study instead of practice, I would do that instead of

staying up later to try to do it all, because then you won't sleep and it will just throw you off for everything."

Omar enjoys spending time with his family, including a younger brother, older brother and older sister.

"We go out together a lot," he said. "We always have a lot of fun together."

For those who know him, it is his confidence and kindness that set him apart from his classmates.

"Omar is an extremely kind individual. He makes an effort to be inclusive of all of his peers," his teachers wrote.

"He will notice students who might be struggling in social situations and makes an effort to include them in conversation or bring them into the activity in which he is engaged."

According to Principal Rick Watson, Olivia and Omar are two excellent representatives of the school's mission to create respectful and responsible members of the school and community.

"These are two really great kids," Watson said. **RHL**



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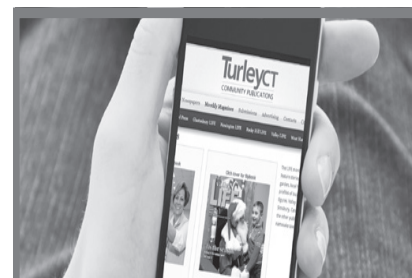
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Experimac also sells new Macintosh accessories.

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Experimac offers used and reconditioned Apple products at reduced cost

by Mark Jahne
 Editor

Computer technology seems to change as fast as the weather. The laptop, pad, smartphone or other item purchased today becomes out-dated almost as soon as one gets home and takes it out of the box.

But now there is another option, at least for those who like Apple products. It’s called Experimac and it just opened at 2162 Silas Deane Highway.

Experimac deals with all types of Apple products but does not sell anything new, other than accessories. The national chain buys, sells, trades and repairs pre-owned Macintosh desktop and laptop computers, iPhones and iPads, among other items.

Most of the products on display

are three or four years old but in excellent working condition, according to franchise owner Matt Rusconi and General Manager Jesse Hartman. Typical changes made before putting equipment on the showroom floor include cleaning the cache, adding higher storage capacity and more memory (RAM), and replacing logic boards.

Equipment is refurbished to work to its ultimate capacity and can be bought for hundreds, or in some cases thousands, of dollars less than one would pay in a retail store for new technology. According to its website, Experimac can save consumers, on average, 60 percent of what they would spend to purchase new at a major retail store.

They completely wipe clean any technology they buy before



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refurbishing and reselling it, Rusconi said. The company, part of the United Franchise Group, is in a growth mode. The first store opened in 2012 and the 100th is scheduled to welcome customers soon.

"This is the first one in Connecticut. The only other one in New England right now is up in New Hampshire," Rusconi said.

He added many of the products they repair and sell are no longer supported by Apple. His shop can also repair PCs. Experimac is in a partnership with iFixit, a publicly known technician website.

"There's really no job too small or too big that we wouldn't want to take in," he said.

"We work with them back to '07, '08," Hartman added. "The older ones can be more beneficial to a student going to college."

Rusconi said his store can be valuable to consumers trying to navigate the after-market. He compared it to shopping for a car; not everyone wants to buy new because of the price and there are quality used cars for sale at lower cost.

"I understand how important value is to people. It's a trustworthy place. We're going to treat you right," he added.

Hartman said their technicians have the skills to repair any cell

phone, not just Apple products. The company offers a free 90-day warranty and customers can purchase longer-term coverage if desired.

The list of repair and other services includes, but is not limited, to:

- hard drive repair, replacement or upgrade
- LCD screen replacement
- data recovery
- data transfer
- diagnostics and troubleshooting
- optical drive repair
- PC to Macintosh migration
- iCloud setup and troubleshooting
- new software setup and configuration
- parental control configuration

Financing is available on certain purchases.

Once they get settled in, Rusconi and Hartman hope to offer computer classes to the general public.

"We'd like to be a resource for the community," he said. **RHL**

Experimac is located at 2162 Silas Deane Highway. Call 860-372-4012 or see experimac.com/rocky-hill-ct.

General Manager Jesse Hartman, left, and owner Matt Rusconi run the new Experimac shop at 2162 Silas Deane Highway. They sell, update and repair used Macintosh desktop and laptop computers, iPhones and iPads, among other products.



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Rocky Hill High School honor roll

Grade 12

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Grade 11

High Honors

Sydney Aberbach, Rojina Bashyal, Brendan Boyle, Emma Brownstein, Joseph Catania, Dillon Cerpa, Nicole Chamberland, Shelby Cios, Stephen DeNardo, Haley Doll, Michelle Dougherty, Sarah Erkson, Christian Federici, Alexandra Fishberg, Cole Fishberg, Jared Friday, Salvatore Gentile, Gino Giansanti, Arian Gokhale, Katrina Granovskiy, Michael Griswold, Zirui Hao, Madison Hussey, Sana Kasmani, Sophie Kurdziel, Grace Lang, Marc LaPuma, Rachel Longo, Jonathan Lu, Ioannis Mastorakis, Madelyn Morse, Bree O'Connor, Colin Pavel, Brianna Place, Seyed-Arash Safavi, Brigid Schulenburg, Brian Speers, Samantha Steinman, Katherine Stockman, Nicole Talavera,

John Woolley, Emily Zarrilli and Scott Zebrowski.

Grade 10

High Honors

Pavan Adapa, Anthony Albano, Tomasz Baliga, Gulnaz Bhura, Jordyn Bowler, Gabriela Brown, Adam Buerk, Rachel Calcagni, Daniella Castanho, Sharanya Chandu, Alisha Chhabra, Daniel Cho, Chloe Colandrea, Andre Costa, Megan Creevy, Lilah Devine, Julia DiBattista, Victoria DiLoreto, Nesla Disha, Shae Duffy, Morgan Felice, Kyler Florer, Mihir Gowda, Leah Graf, Lea Grant, Alexandra Gwara, Melissa Hiller, Maya Kugel, Pranjali Kulkarni, Benjamin Lukens, Nicole Lukens, Emma Molloy, Nulkit Nagpal, Julia O'Connor, Yamini Pant, Alexandra Parks, Lauren Pattison, Angelika Ptak, Hasham Rauf, Anna Riedinger, Julia Rosa, Amanda Schuman, Spencer Shepard, Karalina Valente, Venanzio Weeks, Anne White, Kellie Williams and Syrina Williams.

Grade 9

High Honors

Fajer Aftab, Arbaz Afzal, Mia Aglieco, Nikhileshwar Anaparthi, Aidan Antiporda, Ethan Arcata, Olivia Binaco, Athea Bonamico, Austin Bouchard, Kyle Bouchard, Thien-Bao Bui, Talia Carlone, Nicholas Cella, Avani Chhabra, Connor Choptij, Vikram Chowdhury, Julia Ciarcia, Jonathan Cichowicz, Isabella Cimini, Gabrielle Dahbour, Yuanlong Dai, Kanisha Desai, Nichole Detushev, Nathan Doll, Emma Drumm, Matthew Durkin, Grace Famiglietti, Nicholas Faraci, Crista Fiala, Matthew Fisher, Justin Fraleigh, Adam Franzen, Jason Freitas, Karoline Gawron, Ohm Ghutadaria, Elaina Giansanti, Kinshu Gupta, Archisha Jaiswal, Allison Jo, Daria Kokic, Isabela Lebron-Rivera, Salvatore Lonero, Katelyn Longo, Sarah McGowan, Anna Montalto, Margaret Montalto, Isabella Montalvo, Savannah Muzio, Riya Naik, Marina Nanci, Audrey Nelson-Mbiah, Brandon Onyejekwe, Krisha Patel, Nishi Patel, Parth Patel, Milan Patlikh, Kaylie Pavel, Julia Pawlich, Christina Petrini, Michael Ptak, Jake Rajotte, Annalyn Ricci-

Cohen, Emily Rostkowski, Maya Salamone, Keya Saxena, Jay Scacca, Madeline Stevens, Elizabeth Stockman, Georgia Symeoudakis, Taylor Tenerowicz, My Tran, Lydia Tzickas, Alexia Vassallo, Nathalie Wallace, Erika Watson, Nicole Zarrilli, Sarah Zarrilli and Sofia Zhuk-Vasilyeva.

Grade 12

Academic Honors

Rahul Abraham, Aliyan Ahmed, Angela Alvarado, Camilo Ayala, Kristopher Begen, Taylor Bowler, Nam Bui, Amanda Carducci, Vincent Cassarino, Patrick Cella, Savannah Chasco-Dimauro, Paul Ciarcia, Luke Devine, Matthew DiBattista, Daria DiMatteo, Shannon Duffy, Maya Eisenhaur, Zykeya Ford, Evan Gauvin, Tanner Gentile, Christopher Hansen, Justin Hock, Erin Hourihan, Nico Karabetsos, Dario Kokic, Sara Kokic, Madeline Kovanda, Fotos Kroji, Ashley Macca, Despina Merriman, Joseph Monaco, Arianna Morabito, Grant Nieves, Jusuf Nukic, Kaley Paulino, Anthony Pietrandrea, Ariana Ramos, Miguel Rodriguez, Kyle Rosenberg, Giuseppe Russo, Ethan Simard, Julia Simboski, Montserrat Sousa-Sanchez, Jake Walling and Lukasz Zduniak.

Grade 11

Academic Honors

Victoria Acca, Marisa Anderson, Brendan Aube, Alexander Benson, Luke Brennan, Christopher Brescia, Daniel Cavallaro, Adan Cecunjanin, Ajsala Cecunjanin, Samuel Coddington, Heredia Colon, Kristen Costello, Jordan DelMastro, Andrew DiMatteo, Thomas DiMatteo, Jason Donofrio, Matthew Emmanuel, Torah Ferreebee, Grace Fisher, Connor Gagne, Gina Genovese, Elena Goodman, Madison Gorski, Daniel Goslin, Eesha Irfan, Lauren Joyce, Anika Lawrence, Kiana Lebron-Rivera, Andrew Levine, Justin Menze, Adelina Miceli, Christiana Montalbano, Grace Moore, Tyler Morgan, Sonalia Neemcharan, Jason Oostendorp, Matthew Osgood, Henry Patterson, Vincent Pietrandrea, Szymon Ptak, Melissa Rambharose, Tierney Robbins, Ryan Robinson, Angel Rodriguez, Samantha Rogala, Rachel Roncaioli,

Dovile Rygelis, Robert Saucier, Alexiana Scata, Reva Shah, Sabrina Sokaitis, Abigail Stock, Jonathan Tefoe, Yineirie Tejeda, Joseph Twigg, John Uricchio, Luke Vassallo, Dylan Walsh, Jacob Weber, William White and Wiktoria Zduniak.

Grade 10

Academic Honors

Colin Amo, Hailey Anderson, John Blair, Thien-Kim Bui, Meagan Caesar, Isabella Calafiore, Anel Cecunjanin, Adam Chao, Christopher Conlan, Caleb Cronin, Christian D'Eliseo, Morgan DeCarlo, Viviana Delgado, Connor Devanney, Dominic DiBlasi, Gianna DiMatteo, Riley Donovan, Katarzyna Drozdal, Ryan Figueiredo, Nathaniel Forrest, Felicity Frate, Michelle Galdamez, Nathan Gerace-Hicks, Charles Hilton, James Huddleston, Brett Kiesel, Zafeer Kolia, Alexandra Lopez, Miguel Madera, Francis Malabanan, Marissa Martin, Kate Masciadrelli, Marina Merriman, Sarah Mitchell, Julisbeth Negron-Carrasquillo, Lordina Orleans-Onyina, Patrick Ostrowski, Prem Patel, Aaron Pavelec, Haley Pavelec, Molly Pawlak, Jillian Peckham, Griffin Pickett, Skyler Pitchell, Logan Prentiss, Nijaz Salihovic, Ashley Scacca, Sarah Simard, Lillian Spada, Brenna Sweeney, Christa Tucker and Sophie Twigg.

Grade 9

Academic Honors

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RHL

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by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff

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Healthy Living

MYTH: Stretching before exercise reduces the risk of injury.

TRUTH: Boguslaw Badon, licensed physical therapist and owner of Farmington Valley Physical Therapy, said many of her clients feel that pre-exercise stretching will reduce the risk of injury through improvements in range of motion, decreased muscle stiffness and increased blood flow. However, none of that is true.

“Traditional stretching, where you hold a pose with your body in such a way so that you feel a pull on your connective tissue or muscles, is called static stretching. Many people will stretch their hamstrings and quads before a run, or arms and shoulders before swimming or tennis. The truth is, you’re probably not doing much for your workout and might even be reducing your strength, power and performance,” she said.

Studies have concluded that stretching does not affect the incidence of overuse injuries, nor does it reduce the muscle soreness that can come a day or two after having done

too much. In addition, Badon said, static stretching could actually reduce strength and power between 5 percent and 30 percent.

To prepare for exercise, she recommends a gradual aerobic warmup that includes dynamic stretching for sports that require more range of motion.

“Static stretching is better as part of cool down and recovery when reducing muscle tension and elasticity makes more sense and you won’t be immediately relying on your muscles to generate power,” she said.

Static stretching as well as exercise systems that emphasize eccentric muscle strengthening like Pilates, Somatic Movement, Gyrotonic or Yoga, all are beneficial as part of a well-rounded fitness regimen to help maintain a strong, flexible, coordinated body.

MYTH: Weight loss is just calories in vs. calories out.

TRUTH: While weight loss advice is often pared down to sayings such as “You have to burn more calories than you eat to lose weight,” Renee Bordeaux,

owner of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington, said, “Most people who are overweight actually don’t consume enough calories.”

Most people, she explained, will lose some weight by cutting back moderately on calories, but that’s not the whole story.

“If you cut back too much, your body thinks you are starving, causing it to burn even less calories, making weight loss more difficult.”

She recommends eating high-quality foods including lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables to fuel your metabolism throughout the day.

“That way, the body will feel it is receiving enough calories and will shed excess fat.”



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Healthy Living

MYTH: You can spot reduce fatty areas.

TRUTH: "Selective fat reduction is not something that can be done with exercise," said Mary Badon, a physician and the director of SOMA Movement Studio in Unionville.

"The fat-storing cells in your body, called adipocytes, are like balloons. When you are skinny, you have empty balloons all over your body. As you gain weight, these balloons fill with fat. The number of adipocytes stays the same regardless of your weight; the amount of fat they are storing simply changes.

"The myth of spot training is that if you do a lot of a certain exercise, you can selectively lose weight in your legs, core, arms, etc. Unfortunately, while you can selectively build muscle mass in certain parts of your body, barring hormonal issues, fat loss happens all over your body. If you want to lose fat from a specific spot of your body, like your abs, you have to lose overall body fat," she said.

On a related note, she said it is

true that permanent fat reduction procedures such as liposuction and non-surgical liposuction can create uneven fat distribution upon regaining weight.

"Since some of the adipocytes are gone, there is no longer a place to store fat in that part of the body. Should you gain weight in the future, the fat will be stored in whatever adipocytes remain in your body, so you may see more weight gain in the untreated parts of your body like your arms, back, or chin than you normally would if your normal weight gain pattern would get a muffin top."

MYTH: Fat makes you fat.

TRUTH: For the past several decades, faulty studies have put forth the notion that following a low-fat and, consequently, higher carbohydrate diet, would help lower weight and lead to better overall health.

"After years of following these guidelines, the reality is that two-thirds of Americans are overweight, with one-third categorized as obese,"

said Denis Horen, a nutrition coach at Ideal Weight Loss in Simsbury. "More recent research on fat has proven the exact opposite to be true and has led to a paradigm shift from lower fat to lower carb diets."

A moderate intake of good fats – such as nuts, olive oil and avocado – creates a feeling of fullness, makes food taste better and helps with the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, he said.

"Excessive carbohydrates, which break down into blood sugar, are the real culprit. Processed foods, which are high in carbs, can lead to insulin spikes and, consequently, decreased blood sugar. This in turn causes us to be hungrier and crave more sugar. Beyond obesity, higher carb intake can lead to metabolic syndrome and Type 2 diabetes.

"Moderate fat consumption doesn't make you fat. Empty carbohydrate calories found in processed foods make you fat," Horen said.

MYTH: Gluten-free foods are healthier.

TRUTH: "Gluten is a protein found primarily in wheat, barley, rye and many processed foods," explained Jennifer Thomas, a food-loving POP Weight Loss nutritionist out of Glastonbury who holds two degrees in nutrition.

"Individuals with celiac disease or a sensitivity to gluten should avoid these foods. However, gluten-free alternatives like breads and baked goods are often unhealthy choices. This is because gluten-free flours tend to be lower in fiber and protein, and higher on the glycemic index. This means they raise your blood sugar too quickly.

"Extra fats and sugars are also likely to be added to improve taste and texture. A healthier solution is to focus on naturally gluten-free foods like brown rice, quinoa, sweet potatoes, beans and lentils. A gluten-free sandwich can be made healthier by adding hummus and veggies for fiber and a good protein source like turkey. Also, keep in mind that most baked goods are not healthy, period," she said.

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Healthy Living

MYTH: Cracking your knuckles will lead to arthritis.

TRUTH: "According to Western Journal of Medicine, a study was conducted on 28 patients of a senior citizen home who were able to recall knuckle cracking as a child or even now, and those who did not. Each patient was asked to demonstrate how they cracked their knuckle, and their hands were examined clinically with X-rays. Out of the 14 patients who cracked their knuckles, only one had a clinically diagnosed case of osteoarthritis and out of the 14 who were not knuckle crackers, eight patients had diagnosed cases of osteoarthritis," said Dr. Bradley Visconti of Back to Motion Rehab and Fitness in Newington.

There were no major differ-

ences between those who did and didn't crack their knuckles, disproving the theory. As for the sound made when knuckles are "cracked," Visconti said it is the release of synovial gases and fluid between the joints being manipulated.

MYTH: Feed a cold, starve a fever.

TRUTH: Dr. Lakshmi Babu, a family medicine physician with a practice at ProHealth of Unionville, said this old adage is wrong.

The thought process had been that eating would warm the body when it had a cold and that avoiding food would keep it

Food is important fuel when fighting any illness, cold or fever, and must be combined with proper hydration.

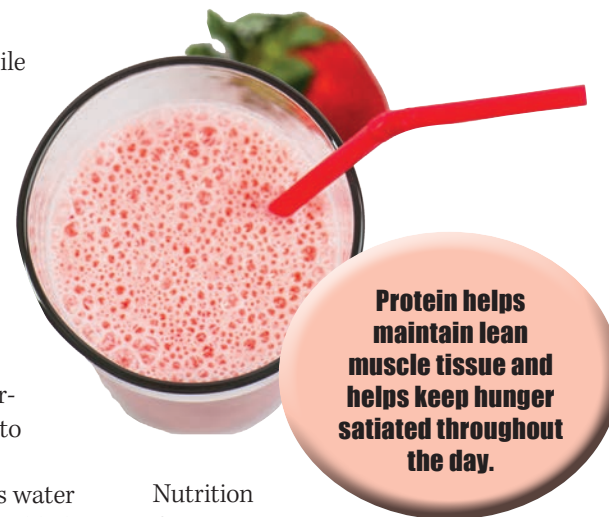
from getting more heated while experiencing a fever.

"Recent medical science has said that we really should feed a cold and feed a fever, because food is fuel and when we're fighting an illness, we need healthy food," she said, adding that while it's important to eat without over-eating, it's even more critical to stay hydrated.

The best thing to drink is water or herbal tea. Hot tea has the added benefit of a vapor that can help combat dry nasal passages when you have a cold. Fluids such as Gatorade or Pedialyte that replace electrolytes are also fine. Alcohol or caffeinated beverages are not good because they contribute to dehydration.

MYTH: Protein shakes will add muscle and make you bulky

TRUTH: Protein is necessary for a healthy, strong physique, said Corey Vincent of American



Protein helps maintain lean muscle tissue and helps keep hunger satiated throughout the day.

Nutrition Center in Avon.

"While protein is the building block for muscle tissue, eating protein and drinking shakes will not make you bulky. Protein will help maintain lean muscle tissue, keep you strong for daily activities and help keep you satisfied throughout the day," he said.

Active individuals should have protein from healthy sources at all meals. "Protein shakes are an alternative when not enough protein is taken in through food," Vincent said. **RHL**



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Healthy Living

Feeling better, *naturally*

**Treating winter
woes with
supplements,
lifestyle choices**

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Winter is in full swing and that means that we're knee-deep in seasonal woes.

Even those of us who stay healthy the rest of the year often find ourselves down and out by the time February rolls around. And

just because an ailment is common doesn't mean it can't make you miserable.

While there are times when reaching for a traditional cure is appropriate and necessary, some folks like to give more natural remedies a try. We spoke to some health-care experts to see what they recommend to prevent and treat some common maladies. Please remember that everyone is different and that no advice is one size fits all. Check with your own health care provider to make sure a supplement is safe for you, especially if you have existing medical conditions or are taking other supplements or medications.

Cough and cold

"Cold viruses run rampant this time

of year. To avoid getting one, boost your immune system now with a healthy diet.

High sugar and processed foods tend to weaken the immune system.

Gear your diet toward lean proteins, fruits and vegetables to reduce processed foods and boost antioxidants in the body," Renée J. Bordeaux, a registered dietitian, Certified dietitian-nutritionist and certified personal trainer, owner and president of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington, recommended.

If you do feel a cold coming on, Bordeaux suggests adding a few supplements.

"Try extra vitamin C, a natural antioxidant found abundantly in

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Healthy Living

citrus fruits and bell peppers. It takes a lot of oranges to boost your C levels. Try supplementing with up to 2,000 mg daily," she said. "Also try Quercetin, which helps decrease the histamine reaction that is responsible for symptoms like a stuffy and runny nose. It is naturally found in foods like apples and cruciferous veggies, but can also be supplemented with up to 750 mg daily."

Sometimes, it's just a cough that's giving you trouble.

"I find anything [like] citrus fruits really helps break up a cough. So I eat lots of oranges and grapefruits or add lemon juice to some hot water or herbal tea first thing in the morning to soothe a cough," Christina Baribault-Ortiz, a healthy lifestyle coach from Glastonbury, said.

She also recommends generally supporting your immune system.

"Organic raw chlorella powder derived from green plants have enough nutrients to kick any cough when consumed regularly," she

noted. "It's very strong, so I recommend adding a small amount – 1 teaspoon – to a smoothie or stir into some orange juice to start. Work this into your regimen regularly and when you do get that inevitable cough/cold, it won't last as long."

Tummy troubles

It may not be glamorous to discuss, but sooner or later, everyone is struck by a bout of diarrhea. Sharon Hunter, ND, of The Connecticut Center for Health in West Hartford, said causes include viral, bacterial (usually food-borne) and antibiotic-induced.

"It's always wise to call one's health care provider. They will know what is going around, how long it generally lasts and common things to watch out for," she said. "Patients should see the doctor if they experience diarrhea that lasts longer than three days, fever of 102 or higher, signs of dehydration/severe loss of fluids [from] vomiting and/or diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, [or] any

of these symptoms: blood in the stool, black tarry looking stools."

She recommends trying what she said is a "wonderful home treatment for diarrhea":

Applesauce

Add 1/8 tsp cinnamon (650 mg)

Add 1/2 tsp slippery elm powder (1.25 g/1250 mg)

Optional: add carob powder 1/4-1/2 tsp

The addition of a probiotic may be beneficial.

Repeat four to six times daily.

"The slippery elm and probiotic will be beneficial to continue after resolution of the diarrhea in order to continue to soothe the intestines," she noted. "All three ingredients help to stop diarrhea. The cinnamon also helps tone and soothes the intestines. You can repeat the carob and slippery elm multiple times per day."

Hunter said that cinnamon should be limited to 3/4 teaspoon per day for 150-pound adult. Children should limit it to much less, based on weight.

For example, a 50-pound child should not exceed 1/8 teaspoon per day in divided doses, split over four servings.

A smaller child should omit the cinnamon entirely and use only the carob and slippery elm.

"For slippery elm, the powder is best, especially for a child who can't swallow capsules. However, one can purchase caps and open them into the apple sauce," she said. "This treatment works time after time, tastes good and is usually easy to get into kids who are not vomiting. Avoid any foods that aggravate diarrhea and stick to a bland diet."

BRAT is the classic diet for diarrhea, which stands for bananas, rice, applesauce and toast (omitting the toast if gluten free).

Winter blues

Shorter days can often bring on an attack of the winter blues.

Christine Loudon, ND, of The Connecticut Center for Health in West Hartford, noted that her

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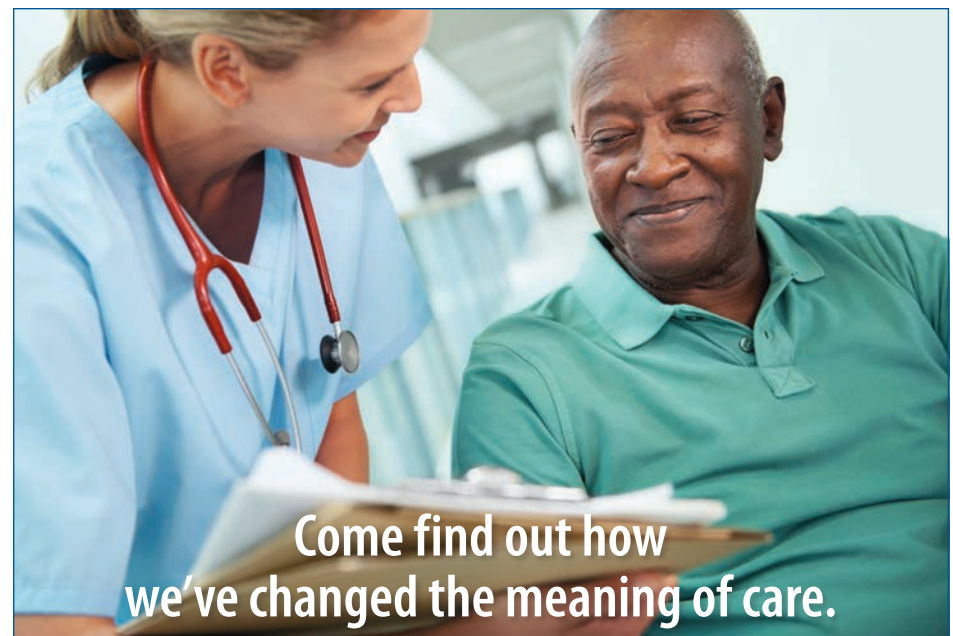
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practice integrates supplements, herbal medicine and lifestyle approaches.

"Fatigue can be a symptom of illness, and individuals should consult their physician to rule out any underlying medical condition. Seasonal affective disorder can be mild or severe, and if symptoms of depression are severe or interfere with daily life the individual should consult a physician," she noted.

She makes these recommendations for healthy adults on no medications.

"Many people who feel low energy in the winter are responding to the reduced exposure to light. My patients find significant benefit using a 'happy light.' Light therapy can lift mood and energy. In addition, it is one of the best methods for restoring normal sleep patterns. Special lights providing white light – not blue light, which can cause macular degeneration – can be purchased and should provide 10,000 lux at 12 inches or more," she explained.

The dose is 30 minutes of light in the morning.

"Good quality and quantity of sleep is crucial for good energy and mood. We cannot expect to feel energized and happy if we skimp on sleep. I tell my patients to aim for eight hours a night. If a patient is having trouble falling asleep, the light therapy can restore normal patterns. The second option is melatonin. People with SAD have an abnormal melatonin pattern. I often use 1 to 3 mg given at bedtime to restore the sleep pattern," she said.

Melatonin can cause excessive dreaming or nightmares in some individuals.

Magnesium can also help patients with insomnia and fatigue.

"In my patient population, magnesium deficiency is common. The best food sources are leafy greens such as spinach and kale. Almonds are a good source as well. To supplement with magnesium I recommend 200 to 400 mg of magnesium, glycinate if the patient is prone to

anxiety, or citrate if the patient tends toward constipation.

"The most common side effect of magnesium is loose stool and this is more likely with the citrate form. Individuals should not supplement with more than 400 mg without consulting a physician. People with kidney problems must be cautious with magnesium supplements as they may experience toxicity," she explained.

Louden said that even something as basic as breathing can make a difference in how a patient feels.

"Pranayama or breath exercise is a simple, effective way to increase energy and alertness and lift mood. It can be done throughout the day. I encourage my patients to use this at work if they suffer an afternoon slump. Many of my patients sneak away to a bathroom stall and practice this. Alternate nostril breathing is one of my favorites. To increase energy, start with the inhale on the right; to calm down at bedtime, start with the inhale on the left," she

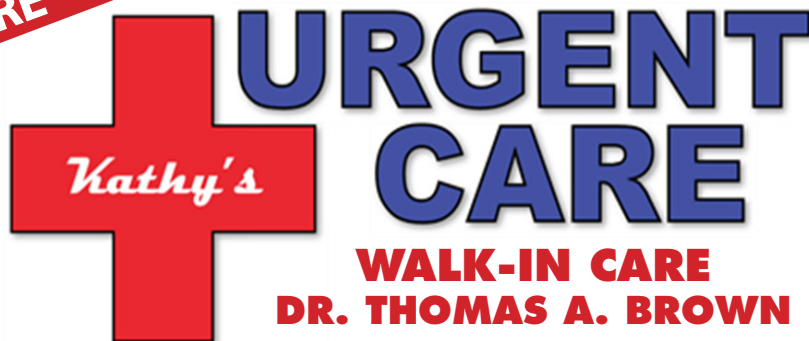
noted. "Hold your right thumb over your right nostril and inhale deeply through your left nostril. At the peak of your inhalation, close off your left nostril with your fourth finger, then exhale smoothly through your right nostril. After a full exhalation, inhale through the right nostril, closing it off with your right thumb at the peak of your inhalation. Continue performing alternate nostril breathing for one to five minutes, following the same pattern."

She also recommends aromatherapy to help with mood.

"Studies show aromatherapy can have a profound influence on mood, and I recommend aromatherapy for anxiety and depression. For increasing energy, mental alertness and improving mood, lemon or lemon-grass are effective," Loudon said.

"A diffuser is the best way to use essential oils, but for energy on the go, my patients will place two to three drops on a cotton handkerchief and inhale the scent as they drive to work." **RHL**

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Shelby

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The Cora J. Belden Library held a special party marking the birthday of its namesake, Cora Jane Belden. Young participants enjoyed birthday cake, music, games and crafts.



Cora J. Belden Library birthday celebration

1. The birthday cake marking Cora Jane Belden's birthday was enjoyed by the party-goers. **2.** Nysha Jha, 18 months old, complemented her pretty party dress with a birthday hat. **3.** Matea Caro, 2, is delighted to decorate her cupcake craft with lots of pretty buttons. **4.** All of the guests at Cora J. Belden's birthday party had fun playing games with the colorful parachute. **5.** Vincenzo Ferreira hands the beanbag to his pal Jonathan Mahard. The two 4-year-old friends were part of a game called the Chicken and the Fox. **6.** Myra Garg, 2 1/2, stands at attention to have her photo taken against the birthday party backdrop. **7.** Sonali Choudhari feeds birthday cake to her 3-year-old son Ronav. **8.** As visitors walk into the public library, a bulletin board invites them to learn more about the contributions of Cora Jane Belden. **9.** Mara Lopes helps her 2-year-old son Matthew with his craft. **10.** Library Director Mary Hogan gets a hand with cutting the birthday cake from Officer Manager Jennifer Amo. **11.** Vanessa Santos has fun with daughter Alyssa, 2 1/2, as they dance the Hokey Pokey. **12.** Children's Librarian Cathy Potter leads the group in a fun version of the Hokey Pokey.



'Part of the family'



Cromwell recreation director retires after 30 years in position

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Susan Schein of Rocky Hill, who recently retired after 30 years with the Cromwell Recreation & Youth Services Department, didn't set out to have a career in that field. She didn't even know it was a possibility.

"I was in my sophomore year of college. I was a history major and I said, 'Now what do I want to do?' I didn't want to be a history teacher. I don't know why. And I didn't know what else to do with history," Schein, who grew up on Long Island, remembered.

She met with a career counselor at her school, State University of New York at Geneseo, who gave her a personality test. The two careers that were the best fit were physical education teacher "or this degree called recreation. I found out about that. It sounded good to me. It sounded like something I would truly enjoy," she said.

"The town I grew up in didn't have a recreation department. I had spent a lot of summers in summer camps. I had worked as a camp counselor. I actually had this background, but I didn't know there was a field called recreation when I was looking for colleges."

SUNY didn't offer the major so Schein transferred to Slippery Rock State College (now University) in Pennsylvania, which offered a degree in community recreation.

She began volunteering while she was a student, helping to run programs, and worked for the town of Slippery Rock for three years after she graduated until the town no longer got the grant that paid her salary.

"The town was a very small town. They couldn't afford two recreation professionals," she said.

While she was pondering her next move, her sister, who was living in the Boston area, got pregnant.

"I decided I'd like to be part of their lives, so I start looking for jobs in New England. I got a job with the Haddam-Killingworth Recreation Department. I was with them for five years as the assistant director, and then in 1986, the town of Cromwell decided to go from a part-time recreation director to a full-time director and they hired me as their first full-time recreation director," Schein said.

The department was quite different when she started 30 years ago.

"They had quite a few programs but nothing was tied together as a department. Everything was run by volunteers who were all doing their own thing. It was a matter of sitting down, figuring out what everyone was doing and how to pull it together and tweak what they were doing," she said.

"The town had some pretty good things, the youth soccer league, the youth basketball league. It was just a matter of tweaking," she added. "I wasn't starting from complete scratch, but pulling it all together and adding more and making it a department."

The department now has two full-time professionals, as well as two part-time employees, and a number of seasonal people who work in the summer.

"That's the biggest change in number of people. When I started we were having a drop-in type summer program. There were two or three



Photo by Mara Dresner

Rocky Hill resident Susan Schein recently retired after serving 30 years as Cromwell's recreation director. She got into the field after taking a personality test.

staff members. Last year, there were 33 people on staff. We averaged 250 kids a day, preschoolers through entering grade 8," Schein said.

"We've added cooking programs for kids. That has always been one of the popular ones. We've added a lot more arts and crafts. In the summer months, we've brought in a lot of specialty camps. It's not only in sports but LEGOs, mad science, and this past summer, we brought in modeling."

Another program Schein added is a junior counselor program for high school students. About 50 students take part in the program, some for one week, others for the entire season.

"[They're] working alongside the paid staff, working with kids, learning responsibilities and taking the next step in their growth. It's one of the programs I'm extremely proud of adding," she said.

That program is for students entering grades 9 and 10. Students must apply for the positions and go

through an interview process.

"It's a win-win-win for everybody. Parents loved it because it gave their kids some place to go. The recreation department loved it because we got additional staff and it gave us additional eyes on the children, and they got more and better care, and the junior staff kids loved it," Schein said.

"They realized they were role models and somebody looked up to them and someone valued them for what they offered to others in the community."

The department offers programs from preschool children through adults.

"Our big summer concert series has grown," she said of the Wednesday night series. "It's very popular. We've really diversified the offerings so we're not just sports oriented. We're trying to meet as many leisure needs for as many different residents as possible."

Her influence was felt throughout the town, whether it was helping

bring the football program to the high school or working to help build the playground at Pierson Park.

"I felt most proud of building all of the bridges in the community. I felt people appreciated that," she said. "The community thought we were doing most things right and looked to us as a resource in the community."

That included getting calls asking their opinion about various programs or looking for information about who to contact for other services. She also enjoyed working with the scouting program in town.

Sometimes she and her staff helped guide parents to what's best for their children – even if that's not a parks and rec program.

"The field has changed a lot, particularly in the youth sports area, in that there are so many more travel programs. All we do is coordinate the fields. We're giving way to them and just assisting them, how they might need it, instead of being the only avenue," she added.

"We try to help parents make a choice that is best for them. We try to give parents an honest view of both the Recreation Department programs and all the travel programs. We're trying to deal with all the private programs and not step on the toes of private agencies," Schein said.

That's one of the reasons the department doesn't offer dance lessons, even though it has had requests for them.

"There are numerous dance studios in Cromwell. We could have undercut them and we didn't want to step on their toes when they are experts in the field. We wanted to stay on good terms with all of those people and work with them," she said.

"I always felt we were there to support the community and not just Cromwell recreation. Even though it's growing and a lot bigger than when I first started, the community is

bigger than us."

Schein, who retired at the end of October, was the recipient of the Humanitarian Award at the Second Annual Cromwell Mayor's Ball.

"She was more than just the recreation and youth director. She was part of the community, part of the family of all of the kids who participated in the programs. She has a huge heart and a great spirit, and we thank her for everything she did to help enrich our town," Mayor Enzo Faienza said.

Schein also worked closely with local merchants.

"Sue was an amazing

"Now that I'm no longer working, I can become a mentor, which I'm really looking forward to."

– Susan Schein

woman. Sue always put the kids first. She was an active participant in the CMA, whether it was helping set up for our Memorial Day car show or coming up with ideas that would spark the children's interest at our Halloween event. She would do whatever to benefit the kids. She will truly be missed," Cara Ehlers said.

Ehlers is co-chairman of the Cromwell Merchants Association.

Just because she's retired doesn't mean that Schein has a lot of free time on her hands. She's been volunteering at The Bushnell for more than 17 years and plans to expand her efforts there. She's also co-chairman of the Cromwell Prevention and Awareness Council.

"We're working on bringing a mentoring program to Woodside Intermediate School. I've been very busy with that.

We're trying to get more residents to become mentors. We'll be doing training in January and getting started right away," she said.

"Now that I'm no longer working, I can become a mentor, which I'm really looking forward to."

In January, she's also starting a part-time job working with bowling alleys to bring bowling into schools, recreation departments, YMCAs and other youth-oriented venues.

"It's not only to have the equipment to run in the facility, but to have the kids come to the bowling lanes themselves. The program is designed not to be just about bowling. The curriculum can be integrated into other classrooms; the obvious one is math," she said.

"One group is actually using it in their science program. It's more than just the bowling. So many kids today are not involved in lifetime sports, they're only involved in team sports. It's important to introduce them to lifetime sports."

She's also planning to look for other volunteer opportunities, perhaps at Manes & Motion Therapeutic Riding Center in Middletown.

She misses certain aspects of her job, especially the people.

"We were all together for a long time. The residents are phenomenal. They're just a great group of people in the community. They step up and volunteer. They'll help anybody in the community, not just the rec department," Schein said.

"I gained so much more at some of these programs than they did. Over 30 years, you watch children grow from young children to college to parents. Watching that and all the support I've gotten really touched me," she added.

"When I show up in the community and people come up and they're thanking me, that means the world to me," she said. **RHL**

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February *calendar*

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

1 Playgroup Plus, 10:15 a.m., for babies, toddlers and preschoolers with an adult, Cora J. Belden Library, 33 Church St., 860-258-7623 or rockyhilllibrary.info, also Feb. 4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 22 and 25

Adult Coloring, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Feb. 8, 15 and 22

Mystery Book Discussion, 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

2 SCORE Small Business Workshop, 10 a.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

La Leche League, 10 a.m. to noon, 23 Textbook Ave., 860-529-2307 or mgubala@sbcglobal.net

English as a Second Language, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

3 Art Start, 10:30 a.m., for ages 2 and older with an adult, registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

4 Take Your Child to the Library Day, 10 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

6 AARP Volunteer Tax Assistance, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., call for an appointment, Cora J. Belden Library

SCORE Small Business Counseling, 10:30 a.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

Be a Library Super User, 2 p.m. or 7 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

7 Career One on One, 10 a.m., call for appointment, Cora J. Belden Library, also Feb. 21

Knitting Group, 11 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Feb. 14, 21 and 28

Getting Started with Windows 10, 2 p.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library, also Feb. 21

Connecticut's African-American Heroines, 6:30 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

CT Hearing Voices Network support group, 7 p.m., Rocky Hill Congregational Church, 805-817 Old Main St., second floor classroom, 203-391-4968, also Feb. 14, 21 and 28

8 Cora Creates Valentine's Day Craft, 3 p.m., for children 7 and older with an adult, registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

Alzheimer's or Dementia Caregivers Support Group, 6 p.m., The Atrium at Rocky Hill, 1160 Elm St., 860-563-5588 or ehall@benchmarkquality.com

10 Ring in the Morning with Miss Robin, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

11 Alzheimer's or Dementia Caregivers Support Group, 2 p.m., The Atrium at Rocky Hill, 1160 Elm St., 860-563-5588 or ehall@benchmarkquality.com

14 Getting Started with Android Phones & Tablets, 2 p.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

15 Monthly Makerspace, 5:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

17 LEGO Free Play, 10:30 a.m., for ages 2 and older with an adult, Cora J. Belden Library,

21 Healthy Heart, 7:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

22 Introduction to Tapping, 6:30 p.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

26 Grant's Way Foundation Pasta Dinner, 2-5 p.m., Elks Lodge, 825 Cromwell Ave., \$20 per person, children under 12 eat free, 860-508-4943

28 Long-Term Care: What You Need to Know, 6:30 p.m., registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

Events *spotlight*



Comfort Food Dinner

Jan. 28, 5:30 p.m.

Rocky Hill Congregational Church

805 Old Main St., Rocky Hill

Chapin Hall is the location of this dinner that features salad, rolls, vegetables, meat loaf, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, ham, soda, coffee, tea and desserts. The meal will be followed by the Magic of Michael Michaels. Call Jeannie Alessi at 860-839-1321 for reservations. The cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 4-12, free for children younger than 4, and a family maximum of \$35.



Pasta Dinner

Feb. 26, 2-5 p.m.

Elks Lodge

825 Cromwell Ave.

860-508-4943

All are welcome at this second annual dinner that is intended to raise funds for the foundation established in memory of the late Grant Stanton. Proceeds will be used to help fund a foot bridge project at Mill Woods Park in Wethersfield. Admission is \$20 and children under 12 eat for free.

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News roundup

Fire departments respond to crashes

The Cromwell, Rocky Hill and Westfield fire departments responded to a significant traffic accident incident and additional but separate simultaneous motor vehicle accidents on both sides of I-91 during the snowy weather of Jan. 7.

The main accident occurred just over the Mattabassett River Bridge in Middletown near the Cromwell town line and involved four tractor-trailers and 26 cars. One tanker truck, one flatbed truck, one car carrier truck and one box freight truck were involved.

The saddle tank on one of the tractor-trailers was breached and dumped approximately 125 gallons

of diesel fuel, according to Cromwell Fire Chief Michael Terenzio.

Additional motor vehicle accidents on the stretch of highway that passes through Cromwell, Rocky Hill and Middletown were handled by units from Rocky Hill that responded with 32 personnel manning four pieces of equipment and two command vehicles.

The Cromwell Fire Department responded with approximately 40 personnel manning four pieces of equipment, two ambulances and one command vehicle. Westfield responded with more than 35 personnel manning four pieces of equipment and command vehicles.

The more seriously damaged vehicles required four extrications of the people inside. The cab section of

one of the tractor-trailers was hanging over the embankment of the Mattabassett River Bridge and required stabilization. Other accidents north of the major incident in Rocky Hill involved two vehicles off the roadway and into wooded areas adjacent to the highway.

Two perish in fire

The Rocky Hill fire and police departments responded to a report of a fire at 65 Walnut Road early in the morning hours of Dec. 10. Upon arrival, they discovered that the rear of the home was fully involved with fire.

Firefighters quickly extinguished the blaze. Then they conducted a search and rescue effort and found two dead people inside

the home. The state Office of the Chief Medical Examiner determined that both suffered accidental deaths attributed to smoke inhalation.

The pair were later identified as Thomas Munger, 58, and Veronica Cossio-Munger, 49, both of that address. The town building inspector condemned the house due to severe structural damage.

The Rocky Hill fire marshal, the Connecticut State Police Fire Marshal's Office and detectives from the Rocky Hill Police Department are continuing to investigate the cause and origin of this fire.

Try adult education

Adult education offers free classes for Rocky Hill residents ready to earn their high school diploma.

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Eating and painting

Three high school completion options are available including the GED and the National External Diploma Program, an individualized, self-paced program without classroom instruction.

English classes for non-English speaking residents are also available for all proficiency levels. Enrollment is ongoing, with day and evening classes available in Rocky Hill and Middletown. For more information call 860-343-6044.

Be wary of carbon monoxide poisoning

The Rocky Hill Fire Department urges residents to take precautions to protect themselves from accidental non-fire related deaths due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Any fuel-burning appliance such as a stove, furnace, water heater or fireplace must be properly vented.

The department advises installing a CO alarm to provide early warning of unsafe carbon monoxide levels. Some of these products come

as combination CO and smoke alarms.

Remove a car or truck from the garage before warming it up during the winter months. Do not run it inside the garage, even if the doors are open. Do not use a barbecue grill in the garage or inside the house.

If the CO alarm sounds, immediately go outside or to an open window or door. Then call 911 and wait outside or by that window or door until help arrives.

Catania rides again

Frank Catania and his cycling partner and fellow resident Rocco Sanzo have committed once again to participating in the Pan Mass Challenge to raise funds for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Catania has set a personal fund-raising goal of \$8,500.

The two men are having cycling jerseys made and people or businesses can buy sponsor space on those jerseys. Shirt or not, any donations will be accepted. To learn more call him at 860-250-0303 or

email brentwoodbuilders1@gmail.com.

Eating and painting

The Atrium at Rocky Hill hosted a breakfast and holiday paint party with Mayor Claudia Baio the morning of Dec. 16. Participants created artwork for a friend or loved one.

This event was co-sponsored by OBTA Care. Shown in the photo are Claire Bellemore, seated center, flanked by her daughters Linda Caron and Renee Rancourt, while Mayor Baio looks on. The Atrium at Rocky Hill is a Benchmark Senior Living Community dedicated to those in need of memory care.

Be careful with natural gas

The Rocky Hill Fire Department reminds residents to exercise caution when removing snow from around natural gas meters and to keep these meters free of ice and snow to prevent gas from building up inside their homes.

A buildup of ice or snow on the meter can plug the vent and

adversely affect the operation of the gas pressure regulator, thus creating a hazardous condition. Meters should be cleared of snow and ice by hand, not with blower or shovels.

New apparatus arrives

The Rocky Hill Fire Department recently took possession of two new pieces of apparatus to replace aging equipment. They offer updated stabilization and other safety features.

Truck 1 is a Sutphen ladder truck with a 400-gallon water tank. It also has a pump that can provide 1,500 gallons per minute from a hydrant. Truck 2 is a Sutphen tower ladder with a 500-gallon water tank and the same 1,500 gallons per minute pumping ability.

Correction

A story in the December issue stated that military veteran Wiroslaw Snihurowych, a native of Ukraine, was "nationalized" as a U.S. citizen while serving in the U.S. Army. The correct term for that process is "naturalized." **RHL**

Editorial



Bracing for a tough budget year

Just when we thought there was a light at the end of the tunnel, that light turns out to be an oncoming train. That's a metaphor for the fiscal situation every city and town in Connecticut is facing this coming fiscal year that starts July 1.

State government is buried under a deficit well in excess of \$1 billion and growing. How our elected leaders let it get to that point over the years is a question that must some day be answered, but in the meantime, we have to deal with more pressing matters.

In addition, the city of Hartford is teetering on the edge of municipal bankruptcy. That would send serious ripples not just through the city, but into the suburbs and beyond.

Mayor Luke Bronin has been visiting any town that will have him to explain how Hartford got into a fiscal mess that is at least \$50 million this year and projected to be more over the next few years as delayed and refinanced municipal debt comes due.

He has publicly suggested a variety of options that could save the city but they are not likely to happen. His choices are few and none of them are particularly appealing.

State aid is the usual way out of such a crisis but since the state is swimming in all that aforementioned red ink this is a most unlikely result. Legislators will be hard

pressed to get their own fiscal house in order.

Not only are they not likely to bail out Hartford, but towns throughout the state – including this one – are almost certain to see reduced amounts of municipal aid and Education Cost Sharing funds. That will create huge pressure on local budgets.

Town councils and boards of education are going to have to enact difficult and far-reaching cuts to make the books balance. Popular programs will almost certainly have to be cut. Employees will almost certainly have to be laid off.

Nobody wants to do this, but they may have no choice but to reduce library and senior center hours, cut back on public works, trim the workforce and put on hold any expenditures that are not absolutely necessary.

School districts may have no choice but to increase class sizes, reduce arts, sports and music programs, lay off teachers and put the brakes on implementing new technologies.

The other option, of course, is a moderate to significant tax hike. No local politician wants to do that, especially in a year when they will be on the ballot in November.

It's vital that people take all of this into account and attend public hearings and other meetings where input can be given to those charged with making these difficult decisions. **RHL**

Letter

Hartford deserves bankruptcy

To the Editor:

Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin came to Rocky Hill promoting regionalization as a way to save Hartford from the natural consequences of its long history of fiscal mismanagement. He said bankruptcy is not a solution because it would be long, costly and would look bad for the capital city.

His preferred solution is regionalization. This is a dream where towns near Hartford surrender many town functions such as taxing, police and fire protection, ambulance service, our schools, parks, road maintenance and more. All would be run by the new regional government.

Hartford is a financial

mess because of 50 years of bad management and crony government. The only way for Hartford to dig its way out of this mess is bankruptcy.

This is tough love, but if we care about Hartford, don't be an enabler. Tell Hartford to stand up to its own spending addiction and enter bankruptcy rehab.

Theresa Messenger

rocky hill LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



Fog in the winter

Freezing Fog, also known as Ice Fog, is something we have to contend with at times, here in Connecticut. But what exactly is it?

Well first, and most basically, let's examine 'fog'... it can form in a variety of ways. Often it develops on a night with a clear sky and a

calm wind – this is radiation fog – when the Earth cools to a temperature that water vapor condenses as the temperature gets close to, or meets the dew point (the air becomes saturated). Also, there is 'advection' fog... when warm, moist air moves over a colder surface, such as snow (this can happen even when there is wind), or even the

colder water of Long Island Sound. Water droplets suspended in the air, reduce visibility – when dense, it could drop to less than a quarter of a mile, greatly impacting travel.

So next, to qualify as 'freezing' fog – it's all about the surface temperature. When it is below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit), those water droplets that make up fog

freeze on contact. As this happens, untreated surfaces can become very slick, especially those surfaces that are elevated, like bridges and overpasses.

This month's article was in response to a reader/viewer's inquiry. If you have a suggestion for a topic to be addressed, or a question - send me an email: mdixon@wfsb.com **RHL**

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